Woodstock April 12th 1835

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My Dear Mother

I was made glad this afternoon by the perusal of a line from yourself and Sisters. I have not a heart as yet insensible to or uninfluenced by the claims you have upon its affection and gratitude. Be assured - Dear Mother - you do not - unite me in vain. - You never can dream your love ill - a return. Your experience has too often told me that arrows thus pointed - thus dipped and thus piercing never was meant to be thrown at random. The execution is too great for a "wild goose shot." But - however successful you have generally been - you have in the present instance I fear (or I would say believe) missed the mark.

A respect for your feelings and a desire to gratify your wishes influence me to notice particularly a certain part of your letter. You ask me several questions - often wishing me to examine seriously my actions and motives of action for the past year which I suppose you intend - as a test of christian character. I am sorry that I find in these questions deeply tinctured sentiments that the main stamina of your duty is composed of the simple element - stern selfishness. This - to be sure - is nothing more than I expected - and I hail this as only the beginning of what may issue from the bosom of my dearest friends even. Be it so - I thank my God - yes - Mother - I do thank my God that he has enabled me to triumph. Yes I do feel grateful - that my spirit which has long resembled the waters ruffled by the shifting winds - is now calm as the sea on which my Jesus trode after having issued the mandate "peace - be still". I feel as always I was founded on the "rock" - and though acquaintance and friends forget me - though brothers and sisters

child and She that bore me and watched over my Helpless infancy "cast me off" - I will still trust in God. He is my Defence and my Strength. praised be His name. He has shown me this truth and this truth has made me free. In the morning will I speak of His goodness and talk of His mercy in the evening. He is leading me beside the still waters and making pleasant paths for my feet. I see more and more beauty and excellency in this truth and find in myself an increasing willingness to search after and embrace it - wherever it may lead me. The feelings which upon questions strangely as present with you at the time of writing - Mother - are perfectly like - and for two reasons - in the first place. Human perfectibility is not an attribute in our creed. Hence whatever may appear them may actions as the cause of them I make no boast of purity. For I can not recall a single act or a motive of a single act of my whole life and call my God to witness it as untainted with sin. of course - a retrospect of the year just would condemn me. Again. I am aware that your feelings are the result of an honest conviction that there was no need of any change in my views - that those on the platform of my Fathers and instructed in the creed of the puritans. my education must have been right. Hence you may naturally conclude that my cause is wrong - it evinces too plainly the stirrings of a restless ambition to be allied to purity of principle and holiness of heart. For be it from me to notice the unmeaning feelings of a Gentleman - the obligations of a son and the high-born principle of the Christian forbid it. I know that my Mother views this subject as I did formerly - i.e. I suppose she never has seriously examined it - and consequently knows little or nothing about it. But as I have been enabled to throw off the shackles of prejudice and carefully and dispassionately investigate the claims of Episcopacy - so I hope and trust my friends will do also. I have too high an opinion of their goodness - their characters intellectual and moral to believe that they will refuse to examine this important subject. and if they do this I have no doubt but soon I shall kneel with them around the same altar and partake with them of the Holy Supper of our Lord administered as it should be. But more of this hereafter

I have enjoyed myself very well the greater part of the time since I saw you - closed my school last week on Friday and left Royalton on saturday morning with the blessings of many apparently resting upon me. My situation is a pleasant - to be very favorable. Mr Parker has purchased a very pleasant situation and has prepared to take me into his family which will consist of himself and wife and servant. He is very wealthy. I feel perfectly at rest as it regards changes. I can see the hand of the Lord in this.

Let me enjoy your prayers dear Mother - that my improvement may be according to my privileges - that as in knowledge so I may grow in grace that I may like a little child sit at the feet daily and learn of Jesus. Write to write me soon - I value highly your letters. Give my love to all.

I may again see my sister. You will inform me when Mr Johnson is expected. From

Your Son Nathan O. Preston

WOODSTOCK
APR. 13
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Mrs Phil. A Fisher

Bennington County

Pawlet Vt